

October 21, 2014

The League of Women Voters of Boulder County (LWVBC) is a strong advocate for public education. We have endorsed almost all school district ballot issues. The proposed bond issue includes much that we find persuasive, however, there are aspects that raise concerns. Thus, we neither support nor oppose the BVSD Ballot Issue 3A.

Most of the proposed \$576 million bond expenditures are based on a clear need or a benefit to the Boulder Valley School District. A K-8 school in Erie would address current and future population growth. Security updates throughout the district would provide better communication. Expansion of early childhood education including full-day kindergarten at all schools and expanded preschool enrollment would be possible with new construction or renovation. Critical health and safety improvements could be implemented.

After studying schools, members of the LWV of Boulder agree that an education program should be “characterized by adequate coordination and financing, long-range planning and open channels of communication” and we find the district’s proposal comes up short on some of these counts.

Three schools, Creekside, Douglass, and Emerald Elementaries are slated to be replaced because their Facility Condition Index numbers (repair costs divided by facility value) are around 0.7 or greater. BVSD's Educational Facilities Master Plan does not clearly explain why those three schools were chosen when other older schools have repair costs in the same range. The 2006 bond provided replacement of two schools (Casey, Columbine) and renovations at every other school, including the three to be replaced.

About half of the proposed expenditures are in the Facility Condition target area, entailing many repairs and renovations. The LWVBC questions the use of a 30-year bond to fund short-term repair and maintenance projects. BVSD acknowledges that neither this bond nor the 2006 bond addressed all existing needs of the district. What is BVSD’s long-range plan to fund maintenance?

The LWV is non-partisan but also is serious about its mission to improve public policy through education and advocacy. We recommend that voters study the bond issue thoroughly and make a well-considered decision.

*Ceal Ruffing, President
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